MOODS AND METRES

21 Sept 1913

20, Chester Street,
Belgrave Square,
S.W.

Dear Mrs Raphael

This volume contains Moods & Metres which were entrusted to me for publication by my husband. My own little memoir & photograph were added. Please accept them with my kindest remembrances.

Yours truly
Jane Hawthorne Harrison

Yours very truly
Charles Newton-Robinson

MOODS AND METRES

NEW LYRIC POEMS

BY

CHARLES NEWTON-ROBINSON

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The following poems in this book have appeared before:—'The Ballad of Richmodis' in the *English Review*, September 1910; 'Claustral Faith,' 'The Foxglove,' 'Love in a Mist,' and 'The Pansy' in the *Westminster Gazette*.

1148082

TO

TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

AND

ST. PETER'S COLLEGE, WESTMINSTER

OF EACH FORMERLY AN ALUMNUS

THE AUTHOR DEDICATES THIS BOOK

PREFACE

CHARLES EDMUND NEWTON-ROBINSON, eldest son of Sir John Charles Robinson, C.B., of Newton Manor, Swanage, Surveyor of pictures to Queen Victoria, and of his wife Marian Elizabeth Newton, of Norwich, was born in London, 16th October 1853. He was educated at Westminster School and at Trinity College, Cambridge, and was called to the Bar in 1879. He married Jane Anna, second daughter of Robert Stirke, and niece of the Rev. Mark Pattison, Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford. He died at Swanage, while the present volume was in preparation, on 21st April 1913.

The son of one of the greatest connoisseurs and collectors of the Victorian Period, whose pioneer work enriches the South Kensington Museum to an extent only realised by those familiar with the *provenance* of many of its finest acquisitions, Charles Newton-Robinson inherited the wide range

of his father's taste with much of his self-reliance and independence of contemporary fashions in connoisseurship. He himself collected eagerly and incessantly in various directions, and formed important Collections of Drawings by the Old Masters and of ancient engraved Gems and Cameos. Of these last he made a special study, the fruits of which appeared in the Catalogue Raisonnée of this section of the Greek Exhibition of the Burlington Fine Arts Club in 1903. He had also in preparation a monograph on the subject, but this unfortunately is not far enough advanced to appear as he left it. He wrote also from time to time many critical papers for both French and English Art periodicals.

But the son was less specialised than the father to the pursuit of Art, and he scattered his energies perhaps too prodigally over many activities in business, politics, and sport. The more professional side of his life was occupied with schemes of Land Development, and the towns of Lee-on-the-Solent and of Tankerton in Kent owe their existence largely to his efforts. The Land Taxes of the Budget of 1909-10 roused him to take an active

part in political propaganda, and he inspired and organised the foundation of the 'Land Union' to resist ill-considered interference with the interests of owners of land. As usual he threw himself heart and soul into this agitation, and wrote the clever skit *Alice in Plunderland* (under a pseudonym) as well as the pamphlet called *The Blight of the Land Taxes*, and many other ephemeral articles.

From boyhood he carried the same spirit and vigour even into his recreations. At Westminster he was head of the water for two seasons; at Cambridge he went in for running and hurdle-jumping. He crossed the North Sea in a 10-ton yacht in 1874 and explored the Dutch Canals, and he gaily describes this trip in *The Cruise of the Widgeon.* In 1882 he wrote *Picturesque Rambles in the Isle of Purbeck*, a charmingly illustrated book giving the old-world surroundings of Newton Manor, his beloved country home; then developed a passion for yacht-racing which lasted throughout his life, and he built and sailed a long series of small racing yachts through quite thirty seasons of the Solent and South Coast Club Regattas. These

lovely and workmanlike little craft were often partly designed, and mostly steered and captained, by himself, and won abundant laurels; *e.g.* in one season *Corolla* (a 2½ rater) took thirty-nine prizes out of fifty-one starts in the Solent Matches. He was a member of the Council of the Yacht Racing Association to his death, and took an eager and competent share in the discussion of technicalities of design and sailing regulations.

As a Fencer, however, he was best known in England and on the Continent, for he not only was an expert swordsman, but he interested himself warmly in the revival of swordsmanship in England. His favourite weapon was the *epée de combat* or duelling sword, and he persuaded a group of enthusiasts to found the Epée Club of London in 1900, with the consequence that English fencers began for the first time to take part in Continental tournaments. He himself was a member of several successful teams at Paris and elsewhere, especially the British Team at the Olympic Games at Athens in 1906. The article on the 'Epée de Combat' in the British Encyclopædia is from his pen.

Among so many competing interests the persistence of the poetic strain proved the sincerity of his impulse to lyrical expression. The Art he loved most was that of verse, and by his verse he wished to be remembered. In the free moments left him by a busy life he always returned to this, and he laboured incessantly at the craftsmanship of poetry. The lucidity of his style in prose and verse is a result of constant study, and with all their apparent simplicity his metres and rhythms are varied and original to an extent not realised by the careless reader. He lived constantly with the poets, and sharpened his sense of beauty and expression by exercises in translation, delighting also in conversation with those who shared his enthusiasm to analyse the niceties of metre and rhythm in English and other languages.

His first published volume of verse was *The Golden Hind*, a narrative poem to which various ballads and lyrics were added. *Tintinnabula* followed in 1890, *The Viol of Love* in 1895, and *Ver Lyrae* in 1896. This last is a volume of his collected poems with some later pieces added.

Moods and Metres was contemplated before the long fatal illness began, and extreme bodily weakness seemed to concentrate his mind, in these last months, on what most profoundly moved him, and even rendered it to his own feeling more lucid and ready. He did not live to see the proofs of this volume, but his signature to the contract for its publication was the last word he ever wrote. One poem, 'The Foxglove,' (p. 38), with its imagery of death and renewal, appeared in the *Westminster Gazette* on the day of his death.

It would be out of place here to attempt any critical estimate of his work,[1] or do more than speak of its tenderness of feeling and simple and musical diction. Charles Newton-Robinson will be remembered by those who knew him not only by his gifts and accomplishments, but as a man of singularly amiable character, and one capable of deep and constant affection. He was an idealist through all his practical activities. Scholarly as his poems may be, song came to him as natural ex-

[1] An appreciative paper on this subject by Mr. William Stebbing appeared in the *English Review* for May 1913.

pression whenever he paused to dream or enjoy. Poetry to him was the atmosphere of life, and its true spiritual reality. The tender halo of feeling through which he had his vision of life clings delicately around his poems.

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LYRICS AND BALLADS

ON A MARBLE BAS-RELIEF BY MINO DA FIÉSOLÉ

The hand is dust which wrought this marvel-thing.
Twelve generations from the Master count,
And then three more;—so far away the time
Since, pacing eve-lone, in the olive-wood,
Under deep shadows, where the fire-flies range
All through the summer night in Fiésolé—
Mino, already Master, though yet young,
Upon the day he wedded, one year since,
Bethought him how to yield into the trust
Of mute, pure marble, that most eloquent,
Most reticent, and holiest of dreams,—
The Virgin-mother, with her infant God.
Ay, there the master of the magic steel,
Emulous, bright-imagining, yet perplexed,
Intent bethought him by what rune of art,
Could he, the humblest of all human seërs,
Trust the mute, innocent marble with his mood,
So that it might express upon a day,
The wedding of Divinity with Earth,

And on another, to all careless minds
Mean nought but sheer humanity unsoiled.
  Light failed his intellect, as failed his eyes
That moonless eve, till, when he turned again,
They caught the glimmer of his own small hearth,
And nearer coming, through the open door
Was borne, amid the scents of blowing flowers,—
Almost as faint as they, and far between—
Now one sweet note, and now another note,
Patient and gentle, pure and constant too,
And yet so faint and broken, and so far,
None else had known it for a cradle-song.
But he a deep breath drew, and cried aloud
'The way is found!'—so was it, and the stone
He chose and wrought hath yet a living voice,—
Yet is it mute, whenas the master willed.

SUMMER: AN ODE

DREAM ye of Summer?
Wake! I am here!
I the new-comer,
Tyrant and King.
Give me your homage, love, and fear!
For all the world's desire I bring,
In one hand, as a gracious Lord;
But in mine other, behold! I bear a flaming sword.

Bid long farewell to Spring, my herald sister!
She, in her sweet obedience, issueth forth,
Since I have kissed her and dismissed her
Unto the yearning wildness of the North;
Whither, with dancing and with laughter,
Whither, with tearful glances after,
All through the increasing hours of glorious day,
She trails her blossom-broidered skirts away,
And through the scented night still travels far,
With steadfast vision bent on thee, imperious Polar star!

Now I, the King, am come into my realm,
My regal progress who shall thwart or stay?
Leagues upon leagues and leagues of yellowing corn
Are witness to the wonder of my sway:
My crown at noon the intense blue sky dome is;
At night I don the galaxy of stars,
Or lightning flash that rends the brooding clouds;—
And from the dawning East I take his fretted golden bars.

Entinctured is the purpure of my pomp
Out of the rosy evening after-glows:
My ermine doth the silver glance of morn
Illumine o'er the mountain-mantling snows:
And for mine azure, scan the dreamy seas,
That mime the blue of noon, unscarred by any breeze.

All young things, beast and human, bird and flower,
As dear adopted children, to my charge
Hath Spring commended, and with sun and shower,
I bless them, as a guerdon priceless large;
Fostering those with nature strong and sure
To breathe a breath divine, and yet endure,
And marrying those to kind and early death,
Whose weakness my strong ardour withereth.

The uncounted host of various-minded Hours
Obey me, and in turn are these obeyed,
Unto the very depths of secret bowers,
By myriad blades of grass and nameless flowers ;—
And on the unsleeping hearts of kings their gracious wants are laid.

I joy in rule : my ever-moving throne
Doth year by year the rolling world explore,
And leave no coign unvisited, unblest :
Freely I give, gifts that are all mine own,
I take no tax, nor build me any store,
Come breathing life, and go, leaving behind me rest.

For all the bounteous harvest of the year
Is of my largesse to the world of men :
Autumn and Winter, great as they appear,
Are but vice-regents till I come again—
And come in royal state, and rule without a peer !

A GARDEN IN LATE AUTUMN

The people of my garden are at peace :
In that sweet peace of latter Autumn days,
When, after morning mist, the risen sun
Pours through the silvery fretwork of the clouds
Mild beams that pierce and warm the mild west air,
Filtering through leaves which rustle scarce at all,
Tho' thrummed with intermittent harmonies.
Aloft, among the elm-trees' thinning tops,
Rooks call, and from the distance, by the sea,
The old grey four-square church tower sends a peal.
Bees flit with noisy buzz from bloom to bloom,
Then drink their fill in silence but a moment,
And flit again to try their luck elsewhere ;
While shriller notes, of little busy birds,
Give me the treble of my symphony.
But, O my voiceless people, O my flowers,
Dew-gemmed, and quivering in the sun-warm air !
What peace of near-accomplished beauteous life
Your contemplation in my soul instils !
I too—Ah, let us live the glorious hour !—
The winter of our passing comes not yet ;
Though stealthy on the threshold weighs his foot.
Let us forget, and live the glorious hour !

AN OLD MANOR-HOUSE

Dear home of mine! the morning sun
  Lights yet thy rugged stones;
Though thrice a hundred years at rest
  Have lain thy builder's bones:
Fathers and mothers, boys and girls
  Now generations nine,
Thy fore-possessor's frames are dust;—
  The sun still cheereth thine.

Though thrice thine elms have grown and died,
  Elms wave around thee still;
Where rooks of ancient pedigree
  Yet quarrel, bill to bill:
And in this autumn of the year
  And autumn of thy days,
The old grey church on Sundays yet
  Peals out for thee God's praise.

A sanctuary thy garden is,
  Stone walled and hedged with yew:
About, around, the oft-turned ground
  Still beareth rose and rue:

And still the orchard reddeneth,
The fig, the vine, the quince
Still ripen full their honeyed fruit
As generations since.

The golden wagtail on the lawn
Trips fearless at his will :
Red robin hoppeth on and off
Thy hospitable sill :
The timid martin houses him
Below thy sheltering eaves,
While cheery Rover keeps his watch
As much for cats, as thieves.

And over all the master's eye
Roams lovingly and long :
The wreck of winters he repairs
To keep thee sound and strong.
He too hath weathered many storms
Unshaken, undismayed,
Ere children of his children came
To play, where once he played.

And she, the mistress of his house
And mistress of his heart,
At open door and open board
Still acts her gracious part,

As when they first together faced
A world they hardly knew,
In all the fearless pride of youth,
Each to the other true.

Dear house! farewell!—but not for long,
Though I go seeking gain,
And strive and fight with all my might
In cities, on the main:
In desert lands, 'mid whirling sands
Or furious mountain-snows;
Some day, like Robin, I 'll return,
Dear home! to thy repose.

JOY

Strive not with Joy to veil or to conceal her :
Robe her in beauty all bright things above,
Art be her slave to deck and to reveal her,
Let all her steps go hand in hand with Love.

Him the true love, who all the world embraces,
A god in old days of all men divined :
Lord of all passion, virgin as the Graces,
Eros the seër, not poor Cupid, blind.

THE FALLEN TREE

THE end it is: my days are done,
Alike to me are frost and sun,
Alike to me are night and day,
And one to me are March and May.
Now, in the plenitude of life
All one to me are joy and strife;
I am dying, though not dead:
In the grass now lies my head,
Where, a hundred years ago
I was little, I was low.
Once among my fellows small,
Yestreen I overtopped them all.
A hundred winters, ay and three,
Lightly had passed over me,
Till the end of a three-days' gale,
Fierce with lightning, snow and hail,
With one stray gust out of the North
Caught me unawares, and forth
Ripped my roots, that wide were spread
Under, as aloft my head;

Downward swayed my giant mass,
Till I lay level with the grass,
No more to drink the April rains
Or feel the sap start through my veins :
No more shall every leaf of mine
Tell me is it storm or fine ;
For the keels and for the ploughs
Shall serve my goodly trunk and boughs.

WINTER PICTURES

The trees are brown against the blue,
  Shrewd bites the northern blast,
This wintry day : else might we say
  'Surely the Summer comes at last!'
So pure the air is, after rain ;
  The sunshine, at midnoon,
Doth emulate some early morn
  Or silvery eve, in June.

With filmy azure is all heaven suffused :
  A sheeny green floor strewed with sparkles bright,
The restless bay dwells in a calm unused,
  Below the grassy down's impending height,
  Which seems to topple to its fall, o'er cliffs of
    sun-gilt white.

The still seems moving, and the moving still.
  Illusions both, but Heaven-born to please,
And all the dark recesses of my soul,
  Not oft so full at ease,

Invades the sunlight of a rich content ;
  As deep, and yet as transient a joy,
As Nature feigns o'er all the firmament ;
  Feigns, for already fleeting gusts annoy
The patient elms, and lo ! the dulling North
Speeds mist and cloudy silvers racing forth ;

Fierce foam rips up the sea, the sunshine pales
  Moment by moment ; bitterer strikes the blast,
Brown leaves fall fluttering down, ships lower sails,
  And arrowy sleet-flakes dizzily flash past.
I seek the shelter of my stone-grey home,
And through my heart old griefs begin to roam.

THE CHILD AND THE COMET

In the year of the great comet
Long, long ago ; one night,
My mother lifted me from sleep,
A babe, in childish fright.

And it was past the midnight hour,
All London's clamour still :
She drew the blind, and lifted high
The window from the sill.

She wrapt me in her Shetland shawl,
And holding to the bars
Of my small cot, I first beheld
The glory of the stars.

'Look, baby, at the comet strange
You may not see again :
And those three stars, Orion's belt,
And these, of Charles's Wain !'

She loved me well, she meant it well,
But on my infant soul,
So late from Heaven unknowing come,
A nameless terror stole.

Too deep the wonder and the awe :
'Oh what may this portend?
And is the world, so new to me,
Already near its end?'

And I had eyes for nothing save
The comet's glittering trail ;
It held in thrall my straining sight
And made my cheek grow pale.

A bird of passage, young and weak
And tired, in some strange land,
But just alighted, so felt I,
But for my mother's hand.

CORNFIELDS

In among the wheat-ears,
Waving elbow-high,
Little prayers for sunshine
Whispering to the sky,
In among the poppies and corn-flowers in the straw,
I waited and I listened, I wondered and I saw.

THE BALLAD OF RICHMODIS

A LEGEND OF OLD COLOGNE

I

When in Cologne the plague was loose
It counted each tenth soul ;
Of marriage-bed and maidenhead
Alike, it had a toll.

2

Rich heritage and poor old age,
The gay and the unkempt,
The wise, the fool, the child at school,
Alike were not exempt.

3

To Mengis von Adücht's house it came
And entered not by door,
But as thieves by stealth go plundering wealth
Clomb to the chamber floor.

4

For among her children three
Richmodis dwelt in fear:
The fair young wife, who, more than life
Was to Sir Mengis dear.

5

She heard no creaking of the latch;
Through the casement open blown;
A chilly breath like the shadow of death
Richmodis felt alone.

6

'Go forth, my little ones, and play:
You need not quiet keep;
When you tire of play, to your father say
Mother is fast asleep.'

7

Richmodis on her wedding-bed
Lay in her beauty's flower:
Her tears were few, though well she knew
She might not live an hour.

8

She blessed her husband and her babes,
Called on Christ crucified;
Across her breast her hands she pressed
And then, her-seemed, she died.

9

Sir Mengis rode alone all day,
A hunting in the wild :
When at evenfall he reached his hall
There came his eldest child ;

10

Pale Ermengarde, with tear-wet eyes,
And ' Father dear,' she said,
' Mother doth keep so fast asleep,
We children are afraid.'

11

The heart of Sir Mengis stood stock-still,
His cheek was pale as ice :
He strode before the chamber door
And burst it in a trice.

12

And there, her eyes wide open still,
Laid on her wedding-bed,
He saw his wife, as fair as life,
But pale and cold and dead.

13

' Oh that the plague would seize us too !
Me and my children three.
And were it not I guard their lot,
Dead by her side I 'd be ! '

14

He chafed her with his strong warm hands,
To warm her chilly breast;
He kissed her with his soft warm lips
Upon her bosom pressed.

15

And through her marble body warmth
From his embracing stole:
She could but stare, though full aware
God gave her back her soul.

16

But not a flutter of the pulse,
Or motion of a limb,
Or lips to speak, or flush of cheek,
Gave any hope to him.

17

He lit a candle at her head,
And a candle at her feet:
'Sweet, for thy shrift thy wedding-shift
Shall be thy winding-sheet.

18

'None touched thee in thy life, save I,
None else may touch thee dead!
Thee for the grave my hands shall lave
And dress thy golden head.

19

'Not even my hand shall close thine eyes!
Thus, till I come to thee,
And ask for room in thy narrow tomb,
Shall they keep watch for me!

20

'Still shalt thou wear thy wedding-ring
That so it may be known,
Till time shall be I rest with thee
I still am all thine own!'

21

Richmodis with her eyes beheld
And knew his deeds of love:
Nay every word Richmodis heard,
And yet she could not move.

22

No priest would come to pray for her,
No wise physician came,—
Who might perchance have staved her trance;—
None dared a coffin frame:

23

Sir Mengis with his own hands laid
Her in her wedding-chest;
Since all had fear to come anear
The chosen of the pest.

24

And when the sullen morning rose
He led his horses twain,
Which side by side they used to ride
And yoked them to his wain.

25

And so to the Apostles' Church
The living-dead conveyed:
And feared, though banned, with sword in hand
He forced the sexton's aid.

26

When last he threw the chest-lid up,
To kiss her, lying cold,
The sexton gazed with eyes amazed
At her ring of massy gold.

27

They laid her in the narrow tomb
Under the paven floor:
No bell might toll for that sweet soul
Laid there for evermore.

28

But in the dark hours of the night
Befell an evil thing:
With greed aflame, the sexton came,
To steal the golden ring.

29

Lo! when his earthy fingers touched
The living-dead's white hand,
A thrill of shame flushed through her frame,
And she could speak and stand!

30

The felon sexton, grey with dread,
Made off, with haggard eyes:
Richmodis rose, as one who knows
Nor terror, nor surprise:

31

But like an angel doing God's will,
Richmodis reached the door:
The moonlight faint threw blazoning quaint
Athwart the musty floor.

32

But when she saw the open street,
Where the wind was sleeting cold,
'O Christ!' she prayed, 'give aid, give aid!
To reach my own threshold!

33

'My feet are bare, my limbs are numb,
This thin silk shift is all
I have to hide and warm my side,
Till I reach my husband's hall!'

34

Her-seemed she heard command in Heaven,
And lo! from church to hall,
The cold moon-ray shone warm as day,
And her feet were not let fall.

35

A moment at the guarded gate
She stayed, to hear the hour:
Their due twelve times the midnight chimes
Tolled from the belfry tower.

36

Richmodis then with both her hands
The heavy knocker strook:
But long must wait till through the grille
Her maid should dare to look.

37

'O Amchen! open straight to me!
In God's name open straight!'
But like one lost, who sees a ghost,
The girl fled from the gate.

38

'O master! master! come and see,
Some ghost is here outside!'
He weened it were the shade of her
Which but so lately died.

39

And shuddering to the porch he went :
'Who stands there, in God's name?'
'Tis I, thy wife! God grants me life,
Lock me not out, for shame!'

40

'How canst thou be Richmodis mine
I buried yestermorn?
My horses twain, it were as vain
To dream, would leave their corn,

41

'And stumble up the winding-stair,
And from the garret gaze,
As that she could slide the stone aside,
Two men could hardly raise!'

42

But while he spake a noise arose,
And up the winding-stair
His horses twain (nor spur nor rein
To guide them) sped like air.

43

And from the garret window gazed
And whinnied welcome true.
Those guileless eyes with no surprise,
Their living mistress knew.

44

Sir Mengis loosened bolt and bar
And took her to his heart :
'Nor fraud nor spell, nor grave nor hell
Us two shall ever part ! '

MOODS

Only the ear
Attuned, can hear:
Only the heart
Full-throbbed, hath part
  In that devising of delight,
  Which master-spirits glean from light
  Of sunny day and summer night.

Go, lovely dream!
  Thou art not mine!
In thy embrace,
  O sprite divine!
I lie a space,
  Yet am not thine!

MAY AND NOVEMBER

THE flame in the ember
  Is blent and abated ;
May with November
  'Tis hard should be mated.

The sunshine of Summer
  Is gold on the cornfields :
The sunshine of Winter
  Pales on the shorn fields.

Truth, love and duty
  Age honoureth, lonely :
Youth, love and beauty
  Mate with youth only.

ASPIRATIONS

O GIVE me of your laughter,
O give me of your tears!
To me, who have no sorrow,
To me, who know no joy.

My spirit laggeth after
The meteor flame of yours;
O fling me light from Heaven
An aureole for mine!

The roof which hath no rafter,
The empyréan arch,
Will I escale and vanquish,
When love shall spur my flight.

TWO LIVES

We linked ourselves in lealdom,
My maiden bride and I;
Together in life's morning,
Together in the noon,
Together in the gloaming
We wait the night so nigh.

Oh, gay was our adventure,
To battle through life's whirl,
Together, nothing doubting
Since I was bold and young,
And she so bravely happy,
My lithe and lovely girl!

We played upon the mountains,
We toiled upon the plains;
We climbed the seas of trouble,
And overrode them all;
And now we reaped a harvest,
And now we lost our pains.

And we have known the desert,
  Unkind to man and brute,
And we have seen mirages,
  And found the bitter lakes,
Where garish is the blossom
  And savourless the fruit.

Together we have sorrowed,
  Together were we blest,
And Death has dogged our traces,
  Relented and turned back ;
Together we have wandered—
  Together may we rest !

NONPAREILLE

THE west wind kisseth and enfoldeth her
With warm and loving breath: the waves are proud
That in her glance they fail upon the strand:
The sun is grateful that he shines on her,
Whose shadow is beloved of the sward:
And where she treads, the daisies gladly die.

For me she hath no name, but only 'Joy'!
No parentage—this wonder of the world.
So let her come, so let her pass away,
As one fair morn between two months of gloom!
Oh, thus the Aurora 'mid the Arctic snows
Is born in beauty, yet is not of them;
So leaps a melody from lips unseen;
Yet the enraptured ear bids no renewal
When the last cadence's fruition fades;
Thus, once for all, Love bares imperious eyes,
Which, when they close, are never lit again.

A COLLEEN

Locks that might be spun of the night,
And eyes of forget-me-not blue,
Lips like rose of the sunrise glows ;—
I have lost my heart to you.

ROSA MISERICORDISE

TAKE this rose, and tell it nothing;
  Let it lean upon your breast.
It will listen, it will listen,
  To the secrets of your heart.

As it fainteth, as it fadeth;
  As it fainteth, as it fadeth;
It will wonder, it will question,
  'Who could envy human life?'

As it fadeth, as it dieth;
  As it fadeth, as it dieth;
It will give its all—its odour,
  Pitying, to its human friend.

MNEMOSYNE

Memory, Mnemosyne!
Mother of the Muses nine,
What capricious ear is thine
For those who venture prayers to thee?
Mortals of Deucalion's line.

Memory, Mnemosyne!
Kiss our foreheads—let us dream,
Breathe about our ears the theme,
Then the Muses' gifts will be
Tune and song and wonder-gleam.

Memory, Mnemosyne!
Little claim we of our own,
Men had only hearts of stone!
Were it not for thine and thee,
Pebble stones at random thrown.

HOPE IN CHANGE

Singing for sorrow,
And singing for joy,
Poets can borrow
Hope from annoy ;
Pain has a morrow,
Joy has an eve,
In the night, there is light,
Could we only believe.

POEMS OF FLOWERS

THE FOXGLOVE

July's flower-calendar, fair foxglove, hid
In some sequestered wayside nook, or dell
Of woody cover, thy tall slender spire
Hung round with bells of pinkish purple white,—
Which tinkle only to the spirit's ear,—
Now the boon month is quickening to its end,
Thy count of blossom shed records our loss.

So many days of summer past and gone!
Now only near the swaying topmost bud
A few last blossoms hang disconsolate,
And downcast seem to gaze at Mother Earth,
With passive resignation, knowing soon
They too will mingle with the dusty sod,
And the fair plant will seed and die, and shrink
Down to the buried root for winter sleep;
To rise again, once warm with April rains.

POEMS OF FLOWERS

LOVE-IN-A-MIST

Love-in-a-mist, verdoyant haze of leaves,
  Half-hiding petals blue as April skies,
  You picture me a Northern maiden's eyes
Wistfully gazing, under cottage eaves.

From open casements, jasmine-garlanded.
  Eyes that could pierce the tomb and wake the dead
  With utter tenderness, and that sweet yearning
Of love that seëth most when least discerning.

POEMS OF FLOWERS

THE PANSY, OR HEART'S EASE

Pensée in French, Heart's Ease in English tongue ;
  Two beauteous names, not more than thy desert,
  Soul-cheering flow'ret, never malapert,
But archly innocent and gaily young!

What is it in thy quaint face which appeals
  To man and maid alike ; and conjures thought
  Of absent loved ones, and gives peace unsought,
Now wistful tenderness, now the trust that heals ?

For me, my dainty pansy, fixed and sure
  The answer is, thy soul and aspect seem
    More lovely than a chance look would betray ;

As of some sweet maid in true love secure,
  Whose large eyes turn on those who only dream
    Of love, and toward love's day-dawn light the way.

THE BEST SURVIVES

As, when the forest flameth,
Fire flits from fir to fir,
And shrivels all ; yet not avails
The stout oak's heart to stir ;—

As the Persian host razed Athens,
And the Turk tore stone from stone,
But still austerely fair remains
Erect, the Parthenon :—

So mankind's generations
Pass, deaf and dumb and blind ;
Yet one firm founded monument
Survives—immortal Mind.

DEJECTION

Ah me! the quick succeeding years
  Filch one by one the joys of life!
  As the old charger scenting strife,
Though stiff of limb, pricks up his ears,

And wonders why his hero knight
  Has left him browsing in the mead,
  And saddled him a younger steed
To face the trenchant of the fight;

And so he stops before the hedge,
  Which once he would have brushed aside,
  Neighs enviously, for wounded pride;
Then stoops to crop the scanty sedge;

I, too, am summoned by a voice
  Unheard of others, to repeat
  Some strenuous act, some daring feat,
But yesterday within my choice

To do or leave undone; but now
  A strain beyond my waning strength,
  A race of far too great a length
For slackening stride and troubled brow.

No more I helm the slanting sail
  And quivering hull from wave to wave,
  No more, where avalanches rave,
On Alpine peaks, the sun I hail.

Stirrup and bridle tempt me not,
  Art, nerve and lures desert my foil,
  No pleasure comes of over-toil:
Ah me! these joys are best forgot.

GASTEINER THAL

Gasteiner Thal, by mountain monsters guarded,
  Like tranced maiden in a magic tale,
  When the sun finds and kisses thee, fair vale,
With what a waking smile is he rewarded!

A wandering bard, who caught that smile and kept it
  Locked in the treasure-chamber of his mind,
  To make return in rhyme-gold is inclined,
Before Italian beauties intercept it.

Thy comely brow is pillowed on the snows,
  Adown thy slender neck the cataract
    Pulses like life's-blood towards a maiden breast;
Thy piney tresses, harbouring repose,
  Thy skirts, which broidered blossom never lacked,
    Fit with choice beauty, shyly half-confessed.

OF VIOLETS

TO V. M.

EXACTLY when, with shy and dewy glances,
The pristine Violet captured early Man,
History tells in none of her romances,
But probably in Eden first they met:
She playing her pretty part in Nature's plan,
While Adam, as a gardener, had full leisure,
To bathe his soul in pure æsthetic pleasure,
And Eve was choosing scents for her toilette.

Great must have been the mutual attraction,
Or such a blameless bud of Paradise
Would not have joined the party of reaction
And left warm Eden for climes cold and wet,
Unless, by impulse natural as nice,
The seraph with the flaming sword permitted
The graceless Adam, whom he rather pitied,
To root your forebears up, dear Violet!

With them, I fancy, also played the truant
The snowdrop, emblem of a pure white youth;
Of Eden origin one sign concluant
Is how he scorns the seasons that are set

For coarser blooms, and pushes up, like Truth
Defying Falsehood, flouting altogether
The worst behaviour of the wintriest weather :
True mates ye seem in this, my Violet!

Each may attend upon the Queen of Roses,
But not, I think, on any meaner flower.
When I perceive you tied in vulgar posies
With commoners like stocks or mignonette,
My heart is woe ; but still more doth it glower
To see your pure blooms dragged to lower levels
And used despighteously in orgic revels,
Then thrown aside and on the dust-heap set!

But poets, artists, all of noble quality,
In brief, the pride of all our human-kind,
Worship the Violet's dear personality.
A duchess, be she blondine or brunette,
Possessing diamonds which a saint would blind
To Heaven, let him protest never so loudly,
Wears on her heart a bunch of violets proudly,
But only on her brow her coronet.

A TIROL VALLEY

Dear Tirol valley, keen of air, like wine
Cooled in the making, up among the snows
Dusted on peaks where Edelweiss yet grows,
Often for thee in London shall I pine,
And the mild glances of thy yokeling kine,
With whom the stubborn ploughshare willing goes,
When gathered harvesting the bare land shows,
And grapes are mellowing on the scanty vine.

Thy peasant homes to me are gay and dear,
Their cheerful balconies, their shadowy eaves ;
What if the wind's awhirl with tarnished leaves?—
King Winter's running-footmen,—more 's the cheer
They promise, now that burying snows are near,
Warm harbour proffer they to men and beeves
When that harsh monarch the poor vale bereaves
Of all hobnobbing with the out-world drear :

And eloquent thy homely church I find,
Dear vale, its humble mimicry of art,
Bought with scant coin,—to stir the pious heart

Of simple peasantry, as well designed
As any masterwork of Grecian mind,
  Or aught that Gothic sculptors could impart
  To wood and stone, transfigured, till we start
To feel their skill, a marvel in its kind.

If, screened by mountains, the reluctant sun
  Leaves half the valley half the year in shade,
  No matter! Ye have ploughed and sown and
    prayed,
Each year since tillage here was first begun,
Ye patient hamlet fathers, doubting none
  But that once more the sun would melt blockade
  And new grass peep, buds burgeon in the glade,
And yet another harvest would be won.

But while my soul is charmed by mountains grey,
  With armies of the pine-wood overgrown,
  Alive and rustling in the morning-sheen,
Where cheery peasants chant the livelong day,
Why do mine eyes grow dim and thoughts go stray,
  And other memories throng in between,
  And move my heart to yearning blest and keen,
Fair native land, for thee so far away?

Deep would I draw one breath of Yorkshire free,
  Half sea-whiff and half moorland heather, now,
  From leagues of purple on that misty brow

Where Ravenscar juts out into the sea!
And dear are Dorset's windy downs to me,
  Where the white cliffs of Swanage, like a prow,
  Stem the unsleeping surge, and therebelow
Shelter the cosy townlet under lee!

THE NEGLECTED PORTRAIT

AN IDYLL

A PORTRAIT-painter loved a girl, whose beauty
Words could not hint, or colours match ; her grace
Transcended wonder ; those who looked on her,
With introspecting vision, deemed her form
The incarnation of some tropic blossom,
Wherein all sunshine gathered in a flame,
Which through a lantern-film of lucent flesh
Glowed ardent ; she, as it were, an altar-shrine,
And he, the flower of manhood, her arch-priest.
Withal her voice was gracious, and her talk,
Womanly, not too grave, and not too thin.

Close friends were they from April into June,
Fair-harboured in a garden-hid pavilion,
With rose and honeysuckle intertwined,
There, where the Alpine mountains cool their feet
In thy capricious waters, Garda Lake.

Their souls, to him it seemed, were in accord
So close, that nought could jar the unison ;

And when she had sat to him seven brief hours in all,
Upon as many days, and he had painted
A miniature vision of her face,
Wherein, love helping his consummate skill,
Her image was more lovely than herself,
He thought, 'What gift can please her more than this?
Done by my hand, a miracle of art,
A champion of her beauty 'gainst all time?
To-morrow is her birthday—we shall see.'

Late in the morning, when the sun grew warm,
He came in from the garden, clad in white,
The lover and the artist in the man
Transfiguring him, so that he looked and moved
Heroic, if her eyes had only seen;
But combing her strange red-gold locks she sat;
Her gaze averted from the garden door.

He pressed unheard into the morning-room,
And kissed her, suddenly, bending from behind,
Upon the immaculate splendour of her brow.
She kissed in turn, uplooking, with her head
Thrown back, and seeing some small thing in his hand,
Said: 'What do you bring me as a birthday gift?'

'My queen of heaven!' he said, 'my perfect one,
Time after time I have given you little jewels,
Chosen with care and beautiful in their kind,
But now—to-day—I think I owe you this,
Done with my own hand, and all life's whole art
And all my lover's soul instilled in it.'
And so he set the portrait in her palm.

But she, expecting to have seen a gem
Sapphirine, opal, ruby or emerald,
Set round perhaps with pearls of Orient,
Gave a slight start;—and in that moment it seemed
To him as if a little chilly cloud
Had come between him and the morning sun.

And then came other words than she had ready,
And other far than those he hoped and longed for,
A little coldly and uncertainly:
'Oh, thank you! what a wonderful surprise!
The face looks so much better in the frame—
You thought, perhaps, I helped, by sitting to you,
And ought to have reward— Yes, yes, it 's like me;
But have you caught the colour of my hair?
And are the eyes as large and limpid as mine?
You smile!—I 'm often told they 're large and limpid.
Thank you, my dear, I 'll take great care of it,
And I am proud because it 's our joint work.'

So saying, she put the matchless work of art
In a compartment in her dressing-case,
And snapped the lock. To him it seemed as if
The disc of the moon were creeping o'er the sun,
At midday. Sullen-yellow seemed the sky,
And a chill seemed to invade his very heart.
At last he gathered words. 'I 'm glad it pleases you,
Even with some defects,—how could it bear
Direct comparison—my love—with you?
But you are the only one in all the world
To whom it should be better than any mirror.
Still if some other gift would please you more,
Say so, our minds are open to one another,
My only wish is you should love my gift.
And since an artist such as I, perforce,
Is something of a bargainer in this world,
I make no silly boast in telling you,
The trifle 's valuable, as such things go.'
And still the eclipse kept stealing o'er his heart.

She flung a sharp glance on him, and reaching out
Snapped open her dressing-case, and took the portrait
Softly between her smooth and waxen fingers,
Which never worked, save for her person's care.
'Valuable?' she said, 'I never thought of that.
Of course *I* couldn't sell it:—but *you* could.

That is, my dear, suppose you wished to do so!'
And the eclipse was total in his heart.

He said: 'The work is of my very best:
The fruit of all my life of art is there.
The painting has the inner light of love;
Yet it must fade. A picture, scarcely dry,
Falls ever back a little from its best,
And this is no exception. Well, the value
Of such a masterpiece of my hand, just now,
Is equal to a pile of sterling gold
Such as would make that spray of diamonds yours
You coveted.'
'Oh,' cried she, clapping her hands,
'Then it will buy me just the thing I want—
Our joint work—you yourself of course can sell it
And possibly get something for yourself.
How sweet you are, to do such things for me!
My darling!'
'Very well,' he said, 'then be it so!'
And the eclipse drew slowly past his heart.
But that same week these two went opposite ways,
And never met again.

OCTOBER

KIND is the season of the year,
  And mellow for the furrows ;
October, sending woods to sleep
  And beasties to their burrows.

Hark ! puppies yelping through the brake,
  Bode Reynard's offspring trouble,
And now the shooters, right and left,
  Are busy in the stubble.

The woods are raining gold and red,
  When breezes brush their tresses,
And every hedge, with Autumn hues,
  The seeing eye caresses.

Now bryony, with scarlet balls,
  Hath ivy-green for fellow,
And hips and haws and holly shine
  Red through the brambles yellow.

With glory of uncounted blooms
  The garden 's yet a tangle :
There for the primest honey-sweets
  The busy insects wrangle.

With asters, roses, marigolds,
  Sweet-peas and stocks and daisies,
Valerian and golden-rod,
  Each bed a very maze is.

And up, around, and in between
  Climbs gay nasturtium blossom,
With purple-blue convolvulus bells :—
  Blow !—soft south-winds, and toss 'em !

For every eve of dying airs,
  Of calm and drowsy gloaming,
We dread the sunshine 's gone for good,
  And killing frost is coming.

Now push the oak-log on the hearth,
  And closely draw the curtain ;
Of merry dreams to-night, at least,
  I 'll try to make quite certain.

So, Mary, bring a brace of trout,
  Then serve the young cock-pheasant
I shot last Wednesday, whizzing from
  The spinney of Mount Pleasant.

Bring up the 'eighty-seven port,
  The walnuts and the medlars ;
Let pork regale the yokel sort
  And porter fuddle pedlars.

Soon as the bubbling coffee 's drawn,
Light me a mild Havana :—
And now for dreams ! and first of all,—
Of sea-rocked, home-bound Anna !

Sweet Anna !—through the mist of tears,
Which hangs about my eyesight,
I see myself again a boy,
Who sought to shine in thy sight.

What matters if the year and I
Are each in our October ?
I hear a singing in the air
Not for the tamely sober.

Thanks, kindly rill of Paradise !
My pint of 'eighty-seven :
For just a glimpse of Anna's eyes,
Deep, dark and bright as heaven !

HEROES ALWAYS!

We have outlived our fathers, our forerunners;
We are much older:
They, some say, were bolder:
And hardier: they would fight and bleed
Where we flinch and slack our heed.
We are no match for Nelson's gunners,
Or the squares of Waterloo,
Cry the croakers—Is it true?

There are none better than the best!
Great is our debt indeed
To those who stood the test
In Britain's hour of need:
There are none better than the best!

Yet, as we once had heroes,
So have we heroes now;
No feebler we of sinew,
And we are the broader of brow:
Dare we lag behind the best?

SONG

AN ODE

Song am I, and I am the child
Of camp and home, and court and wild,
  Of seaman, hunter, soldier, slave,
And King and Queen, and man and wife,
In joy and grief and peace and strife:
    And now I hush a babe asleep,
  And now I thrill the minster nave
  To glorify a martyr's grave;
    And now I chant athwart the deep
  To speed the ship for peace or war, and spur to
      arms the brave.

I was before, and not till after
Was Music born, with Love and Laughter.
  On mortal breath I took my wing,
  Long ere with pipe or string
    Musicians played harmonious parts:
  Long before language grew,
  Fire-new and fresh I flew
    From the free lips of men and their free hearts.

Lowly I began :
Rough the first man,
Striding, rejoicing, through the sunless forest ways ;
Chanting his uncouth lays ;
  Words had they few—yet a meaning :—
Wild was the woman, clad in her long hair,
Crooning to her youngling in the rock-set lair,
  Crooning to her youngling till the weaning.

Harsh-mouthed was I,
  In the beginning ;
But when the measured word
Once the dour spademan heard,
  With his woman at her spinning ;
In their loves, and in their labour,
To the din of pipe and tabor,
To the swaying of the dance,
To the shaking of the lance,
I, Song, the Heaven-sped,
Unto proud Verse was wed ;
  Were seldom bride or groom so worth the winning !

Lo ! and then the sisters three,
  Music, Dance and Poesy,
Came, bearing each a gift supreme
  To seal our union divine :
Such gift as only poets dream,
  They of the Muse's chosen line.

For few indeed were great bards ever
Prevailing by their proud endeavour,
To sing amid the silence of their brothers;
Who by loyal acclamation,
Yielding tacit admiration
Accorded them the place above all others.

Yet these few, and they their peers,
Through the mazes of the years,
Millenniums ere father Homer touched the lyre,
Boldly championed the true
While in Art they sought the new,
In ever-changing moods of song, ablaze with heavenly fire.

Nameless, alack! they rest
On the Earth Mother's frigid breast
Beneath forgotten cities, in the deserts and the seas:
Fame for them was brittle,
Gold gat they little,
Art only their reward and song alone their ease.

Yet men desist not,
New bards resist not
The magic and the spelldom of my charms,
I, Song undying,
Lead with banners flying,
And souls of high poets leap to arms.

Let whatever come,
I, Song, will not be dumb.
  Brother of joy, and brother, too, of sorrow.
Hymning and chanting,
Heartening and haunting,
  Glad with men to-day, and sad, perchance, to-morrow!

Let Life's order alter,
Art and Learning falter,
  And new men wild men be;
Tenting on the good land,
Hiding in the wood-land,
  Listen yet, listen yet for me!

For I will sing where the mountain flocks
  Are tended by the free,
And I will sing with the fisher-folk
  By the mystery of the sea,
And I will sing where man may live
  By plough or nomadry.

Till the sun starves out and the stars grow dim,
  And Earth lies cold and stark,
When the Universe flashes to fiery dust,
  And the flame of Life is dark.

JOCK THE ROVER

(FOUNDED ON THE OLD FRENCH POEM OF 'JEAN RENAUD')

WHEN Jock the Rover won to land,
Hiding his death-wound under his hand,
His old blind mother knew his tread,
And 'Welcome! son of mine,' she said,
'For joy you bring to the house of joy,
Your bonny wife has borne a boy.'

'Ah, mother! not my bonny wife,
Nor yet my bairn may glad my life,
For I grow cold in the clutch of Death!
Lay me a bed for my last breath,
But lay it softly, mother dear,
That so my wife may never hear.'

And at ebb of tide and at midnight's toll,
Jock the Rover breathed out his soul.

'O tell me quickly, mother dear,
What hammering noise is that I hear?'

'Sweet my son's wife, that 's no more
Than the carpenter come to mend the door.'

'O tell me soothly, mother dear,
What doleful chant is this I hear?'

'Sweet my daughter, that 's no more
Than a beggar whining at the door.'

'O tell me truly, mother dear,
What sobs and moans are those I hear?'

'My darling, that 's no less, nor more,
Than a mother mourning the babe she bore.'

'Then tell me wherefore, mother dear,
Your own eyes drip with tear on tear?'

'Alack! because I cannot hide
The grave is dug for Jock that died!'

'O mother! speak the sexton true
That he shall dig the grave for two,
And in my coffin let there be
Room for my bairn as well as me!'

MEDITATIVE POEMS AND ELEGIES

PERPLEXITY

Are these Thy ways, all-ruling God,
  Only to breathe whose name were crime
  If once, in all the lapse of Time,
One mortal in Thy presence trod,

And knew, in awe—Are these Thy ways,
  To crush the good, to quell the just,
  To lay the beautiful in dust,
And so exalt the foul and base?

If this be true, then must we bend
  Sad brows, and own our 'right' and 'wrong'
  Mere human fancies,—which belong
But to the means, and not the end:

The world a parlous ford for souls,
  By which they reach that further side
  Of life's cold river—purified,
And tempered to their perfect wholes.

LINES TO ONE DEAD

Her locks were of the twilight,
  Her cheek was of the rose,
Her gait was as through Paradise
  An angel-maiden goes.

There blew a black blast out of the North :
Her body quailed—her soul came forth,
Shining through her stricken frame!—
Heaven called her by her earthly name,
And she made answer, unafraid,
'When hath Thy servant disobeyed?'

And now she treads in Paradise
  The meads I may not see ;
Yet well I know, yet well I know,
The flowers beneath her light foot blow
  And are not crushed, like me!

THE BREATH OF THE UNIVERSE

Men and women, what are we ?—
Pan-pipes blown by destiny.
Ah, the agonising tunes !
Riddle-music writ in runes,
Descanting superhuman themes,
Lit with laughter, dark with screams !

Ever blows the mighty breath,
Scarce divine we what it saith :
Snatches of discordant airs
Mock our ears and cheat our prayers.
Hard indeed is felt the curse,—
This breathing of the Universe,
Through such throbbing reeds as we,
Souls of men and women, be.

TIME

So smoothly runs the restless tide of Time
  That of its motion take we little care,
  So gently borne ; till suddenly aware,—
Perhaps by noise of some cathedral chime
From towers ahead, not seen yet, or by loss
  Of some familiar landmark, left astern,—
  We in life's barque, which never may return,
Take thought of that wild bar, too soon to cross.
May it be quiet then, and no wave toss
  Our placid barque, so little fit for sea ;
  And may the haven, which we long for, be
A kindly host, although our freight be dross,
And we poor mariners ; yet willing then
New seas to adventure, tried and riper men.

A DREAM OF A DEAD STATESMAN

A SUDDEN vision took my soul, unwarned,
At break of night, when birds acclaim the dawn
(Though not till after knew I place and hour),
And in this wise : I, moving in a dream,
Oblivious, purposeless and unaware,
Entered a sunny chamber, where there sat
A form to me familiar as my own.
The face was turned away, but as I neared
He rose : the shape and features of a friend
I knew :—his very presence, in his prime.

He rose, and held each hand of mine in his,
With glad accost, his lips astir with smiles,
While his blue eyes intently looked in mine.
So have I seen him often on the sea,
Curbing the helm through tumult of the waves,
Or striding at my side the flying wheel,
Through lanes alight with glory of the May ;
Or else in eager mood among my guests.

And I addressed him, living man to man,
By once familiar name, now rarely heard.

But even in the utterance, meseemed
A mortal anguish recked his quivering frame.
And in a mute appeal his eyes were set.
Then with drooped eyelids, pale, he swayed and leaned
On me, and wordless, faded from my arms,
And I was ware of commune with the dead.

But spirit unto spirit speaketh not
With earthly language, and his silent gaze
Told, as one saith, 'I fought a fight that failed,
But nobly failed; and by a chance blow felled,
Am reft of hope that, once the fight retrieved,
I might be one with heroes, and again
Strive in the van, untiring, undismayed.
Knows then thy muse no music, and no verse,
O friend and poet, that unhallowed thus,
Among the living, I unheeded wait?'

CLAUSTRAL FAITH

LINES SUGGESTED BY A PASSAGE OF 'LA CITÉ DES LAMPES,' A TALE BY CLAUDE SILVE

When cloistered nuns, brides-maiden of their Lord,
And rapt in holy trance and voiceless prayer,
Lift from their hearts the load of worldly care
By kneeling at the Cross of the Adored,

(Which, as they dream, He bore to earn their grace,)
And making light of God's fair universe,
Morn, noon and even the same tale rehearse,
And scourge the body and conceal the face,

And so behind the bolts themselves have barred,
Themselves by voluntary vows immure,
On faith reliant, and in faith secure,
And all the outworld's jangling disregard:

What if the rock of their reliance fail?
A flimsy phantom, reared on shifting sands:—
Poor shelter gives a house not made with hands,
Against the flood, the lightning and the hail.

Yet even so, what matter if they err,
  These worshippers of transcendental light?
  What matter, to the blind man if 'tis night,
Whose eyelids, closed on day-dreams, never stir?

In our own souls alone the sun may shine:
  The radiant splendour of no dawn is true,
  Save that which gleams athwart the trackless blue,
Vaulting the dusk world of the soul divine.

And surely, though in splendid error born,
  The faith of these poor nuns no shock destroys,
  Already through this life it earns them joys,
And other truth, save peace of mind, they scorn.

SONNETS TO DEATH

I

Death ! when we dare to look thee in the face,
If that be face, where caverns mimic eyes ;
That fleshless mask, where pity nor surprise
Nor aught of human sympathy hath place :

No more, blind executioner ! we dread
Thy sudden, or thy long-impending dart,
Painless, or grateful to a bleeding heart ;
Since a time comes when all would fain be dead.

Yet must we sorrow, when by God's decree,
Inscrutable, some friendship thou hast wracked,
Or slain a hero loved with worship wild ;
Some beauty rare, some full brain, wise and free,—
But yet more hateful art thou, Death, in act
To steal a tender mother from her child.

SONNETS TO DEATH

II

What consolation holds thy witless claw,
Death! thou dumb slave of God, who canst not tell
One secret of thy Master's :—if to hell,
Or heaven, thy victim journeys by His law?

Most who live long discern life's doubtful worth;
Since to the vulgar life is but a toy,
Or unloved yoke-fellow—no fount of joy—
Why should these dread return to Mother Earth?—

Unless they be great sinners.—But the wise,
Who draw from life all store it hath of pleasure,
And bear with fortitude its many pains;
These know how blest is he that youthful dies,
And how at last, when life holds no more treasure,
Old men may count even Death among their gains.

ANDREW LANG

Death, hast thou torn from us dear Andrew Lang!
  Like sudden frost in Autumn comes the news
  That by his urn of dust the kindly Muse
Hath set the genius with the torch. A pang

Clutches my heart when I reflect what load
  Of years I bear since first with joy we met.
  And now it is too late, oh! what regret!—
As one who, travelling an accustomed road,

Noteth one day a new-extinguished hearth,—
  That not more often by its welcoming fire
    I stepped aside to warm my grateful hands:—
And now the house is cold and bleak the garth.
  Yet deem not that those friendly flames expire!
    Hearths wait for spirit fires in many lands.

SOULS EARNED, NOT GIVEN

When we are born to breathe a separate breath,
Perfect in shape, yet helpless human elves,
With vaguest cognisance of having selves,
Beginning travel toward the goal of death ;

How can we match the quick-maturing young
Of lower creatures, which from that same day
Of birth can run and leap and fight and play,
Though, like ourselves, they need the sustenance wrung

From milky motherhood ? Who then may dare
Affirm God gave each helpless human child
A spark of immortality, reserved

From other lives that breathe the common air ?
Surely must men to hope be reconciled
That God may one day grant a soul deserved ?

GOD-GUIDED

My soul is always near to God,
For, if I understand,
Though I am but a nameless flower,
God gardeneth the land.

If I am but a falcon lone,
God lifts me in the air ;
A sterlet, finning through the main ;—
The deep is God's own lair.

A gem within a mountain's womb :—
God's eye thereto can see :
A shooting star in empty space :—
God still directeth me.

God gave to man free-will, but not
Strength to mature his ends.
The foot that follows in God's ways
May slip, yet not offends.

And if I sin in thought or deed,
I am God's erring child :
And though His chiding sear my heart,
Yet His reproof is mild.

TRANSLATIONS FROM HORACE PHAEDRUS AND SAPPHO

HORACE

OD. II. 16

REST is the seaman's one desire
When o'er the wide Aegean tost,
Clouds darkly hide from him the moon,
And all his guiding stars are lost.

For rest the war-worn veteran aches:
O Grosphus!—rest: which neither gold,
Nor gems, nor robes of state secure;—
Rest: which is neither bought nor sold!

Not even pride of civic power,
And riches even less avail,
To soothe vexations of the soul,
And cares which palace-doors assail.

Happy the man who sits content,
With earthen dish and frugal fare,
Beside his father's board—his rest
Is never troubled with a care.

Why, in our trivial span of life
  Are we so busy? why roam we
Through countries lit by alien suns;
  Though exiles, from ourselves not free?

Care climbs the prows of battleships,
  Care rides with every troop of horse,
More swift than stags, more swift than clouds,
  Flung by the mad south-wester's force.

If only happy one short hour,
  Why need our souls look far and wide?
With smiles let sorrow be assuaged!
  What life has *no* unhappy side?

Death stole Achilles, bright and young,
  While sad old age Tithonus knew:
And haply Time shall spare for me
  The years he may deny to you.

A hundred fleecy flocks are yours,
  A hundred herds low round your hall:
And racers whinny through the parks,
  That grace a princedom—yours are all.

To me, Fate, offering no false hope,
  Has but a modest farm allowed,
The rare breath of the Grecian muse,
  And sense to shun the carping crowd.

THE FROG AND THE BULL

PHAEDRUS

A FROG once in a meadow spied a bull,
And struck with jealousy of such vast size
Blew out her pimply skin before her brood :—
'Now, am I bigger than the bull?' she cried :
'Why no!' said they ; with effort and with pain
She puffs her hide, and asks her brood again :
'*Now*, which is bigger?' 'Why,' they say, 'the bull.'
Stung to the quick, she blows herself too full,
And dies, poor reptile, bursting with the strain.

SAPPHO'S ODE TO APHRODITE

Glorious-throned, immortal Aphrodite !
Child of Zeus, deviser of lures for lovers,
Hear me ! not with anguish nor bitter longing
Tease me, O goddess !

Come ! if ever, hearing my voice afar off,
Thou aforetime camest at my beseeching :
Lo ! I see thee quitting the fair and golden
House of thy father.

Yoke thy car to beautiful teams of birdlings,
Urging swift wings over the low and dark earth !
Down from heaven's canopy, through the mid-air,
Soon shall they reach me !

Then thou, dear and holy one ! gently smiling,
Shalt unveil thy fair and immortal features,
Asking what has suddenly come upon me ?
Why am I sobbing ?

What my wild heart dearly desires to happen ?
Who is it, tell me, thou wouldst have to love thee ?
Who is it dares repel thee, or even slight thee ?
Tell me, my Sappho ?

Though he shun thee, soon shall he madly seek
thee:
Though he spurn gifts, soon shall he be the giver:
Though he hate thee, soon shall he love none other,
Howso unwilling!

O come swiftly, free me from cruel anguish!
All my soul desireth, give me, O goddess!
Fight on my side;—ever my true ally be!
Ever and ever!

AN ODE

SAPPHO

LIKE to a god appears to me the man
  Who sits by thee, and hears thy gentle voice
And matchless laughter ; merest thought of thee
  Makes my heart throb my bosom, and rejoice !

And when I see thee but a little space,
  Words have I none, my tongue as mute appears,
A subtle fire steals over all my face,
  Mine eyes grow dim, there 's ringing in my ears ;

A dew runs down me, utter tremblings thrall
  My body—pale as withered grass I grow,
Half dead I seem ;—but love restoreth all :
  Once more myself, all shall be dared, I vow.

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